US private companies in agricultural research sector

1820. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had opened its public sector agriculture research to U.S. private companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a joint declaration had been signed in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) A joint declaration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India and United States Department of Agriculture has been signed on Indo-Us knowledge Initiative on Agriculture. The objective of the U.S.-India Knowledge Initiative on Agricultural Education, Research, Service and Commercial Linkages (the "Initiative") is to re-energize our partnership by promoting teaching, research, service and commercial linkages to address contemporary challenges. One of the features of this Initiative will be a public-private partnership where the private sector can help identify research areas that have the potential for rapid commercialization, with a view to develop new and commercially viable technologies for agricultural advancement in both countries.

Development of pest-resistant rice

1821. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directorate of Rice Research and Hyderabad based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology have jointly developed a new variety of pest-resistant rice called Sambha Masuri;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would take steps for taking the results of this research to the door-steps of rice producing farmers in our country to curb the menace of destruction of rice production, through widely prevalent bacterial leaf blight;

(d) if so, the details thereof, with regard to the measures to be taken; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Samba Mahsuri (BPT-5204) is already released and popular rice variety occupying a sizable area and being grown by a large number of farmers in the country. Bacterial Leaf Blight resistance genes (Xa21, xa5 and xa 13) have been transfered into this popular variety jointly by Directorate of Rice Research and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology bsed in Hyderabad. These new lines of Samba Mahsuri carrying the above genes are under testing.

(c) and (d) The developed rice lines with bacterial leaf blight resistance genes in the background of Samba Mahsuri are being evaluated across the country under All India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project (AICRIP) trials for resistance, yield and quality traits. The availability of these lines to the farmers will depend on their performacne for various traits, their identification and release by Central/State Varietal Release Committee.

(e) Not Applicable.

Harnessing rain water for cultivation

1822. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have asked the farmers to harness rain water for cultivation;

(b) whether Government have identified the areas where rain water can be conveniently harnessed and gainfully utilized;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government will provide some financial help or incentives to farmers for the purpose; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (e) Rainwater harvesting and its utilization in agriculture is an age old